

# STRESS: Madness or Management?

## A Brief Overview

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## ***STRESS***

Can Be  
Maddening  
Or  
Manageable:

“Which Do You Prefer?”

*Stress* is a seemingly normal, unavoidable experience in life. It comes in many different forms, appears at numerous times of the day or night, and occurs in varying degrees of intensity.

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Even though we will give abbreviated attention to the various ‘triggers’ or causes of stress, as well as several ‘tips’ for how to effectively manage it, there are, at least, two additional major variables which must also be taken into account:

1. Personality Patterns/Styles

A. Sanguine

Strengths: Talkative, Outgoing, Enthusiastic, Warm, Personable, Friendly, Compassionate, Carefree

Weaknesses: Weak-willed, Unstable, Undisciplined, Loud, Restless, Undependable, Egocentric, Loud, Exaggerates

B. Choleric

Strengths: Strong-willed, Determined, Independent, Leader, Optimistic, Practical, Productive, Decisive, Confident

Weaknesses: Angry, Sarcastic, Domineering, Inconsiderate, Proud, Self-sufficient, Unemotional, Crafty, Cruel

C. Melancholy

Strengths: Gifted, Analytical, Sensitive, Perfectionistic, Loyal, Aesthetic, Idealistic

Weaknesses: Self-centered, Moody & Negative, Theoretical, Impractical, Unsociable, Critical, Revengeful

D. Phlegmatic

Strengths: Calm, Easy-going, Dependable, Efficient, Practical, Leader, Diplomat, Humorous

Weaknesses: Stingy, Fearful, Indecisive, Spectator, Selfish, Unmotivated

2. Self-Image: *Ingredients*

A. Self-sufficiency

**This is how I think about myself based on how I think others think about me.**

B. Self-confidence

**This is how I think about myself in terms of my talents, abilities, skills, etc.**

C. Self-esteem

**This is how I think about myself with regard to**

**whether or not I consider myself a person of worth or value.**

**D. Values/Ethics**

**This is how I think about myself with regard to ethical or moral principles which determine my beliefs, choices, goals, etc.**

***Particular Importance***

Stress for caregivers of dementia/AD patients, compared with stress for cancer or other health-related issues, is not the same. Some of the differences include dealing with their irrationality, paranoia, wandering, as well as the hopelessness of the case.

It is extremely important that caregivers of AD patients NOT ignore themselves and their own personal needs –i.e., nutrition, social interactions, coping with anger, depression, and self-pity. It is NOT selfish to seek *balance* when juggling between meeting the patient's needs and one's own needs. ***Support Groups*** may be of tremendous importance in striving for this *balancing act*.

## Triggers

1. Sickness
2. Jobs
3. Marital difficulties
4. Divorce
5. Making decisions
6. Media exposure to violence
7. Financial problems
8. Losses – death (family, friends, pets), house, car, etc.
9. Parenting
10. Single

## Tips

1. Mental exercise – *talk it out* with a trusted someone
2. Physical exercise – *work it out* by a walk, jog, dance
3. Avoid perfectionism
4. Develop problem-solving skills
5. Embrace distractions – divert attention to more pleasurable activities or interests (read, write poetry or songs, etc.)
6. Do not expect or anticipate life to be stress-free
7. Be *cosmological* – there are billions of galaxies in the universe and the earth is a small segment of only one of them. Therefore, realize that you and your issues, though important, should perhaps be put in a broader framework
8. Get plenty of sleep.
9. Evaluate your diet.
10. Breathe deeply and laugh hilariously – when time permits!